DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 076 672 TM 002 680

AUTHOR	Loret, Peter G.; Seder, Alan
TITLE	The Anchor Test Study: Administration of the Study.
PUB DATE	73
NOTE	9p.; Paper presented at annual meeting of American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, Louisiana, February 25-March 1, 1973)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Comparative Testing; National Norms; National Programs; *Reading Tests; *Standardized Tests; State Officials; Technical Reports; *Testing; *Test Results

ABSTRACT

The administration of the National Test-Equating Study in Reading is described as part of a symposium on the study. After contacts with each of the State Departments of Education, district and LEA superintendents were asked to consider the participation of randomly selected schools within their jurisdictions. Upon receipt of approval, school principals were invited to participate in the study and were asked to appoint a School Coordinator. The Coordinator provided the enrollment and school descriptive data required for the assignment of tests and the shipment of test materials. Score rosters, showing raw scores, publishers' national percentiles and stanines, and summary statistics, for both subscores and total reading scores, were provided to each participating school. Reports were released to schools by the first week in June. (Author/KM)

FORM 510

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

ED 076672

The Anchor Test Study

ADMINISTRATION OF THE STUDY*

by
PETER G. LORET and ALAN SEDER

Educational Testing Service
Berkeley, California

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

THE INVITATIONAL PHASE

The invitational phase of the Anchor Test Study required invitation letters addressed to the responsible individuals at three levels: Chief State School Officer, District (Local Education Agency) Superintendent, and School Principal.

Specifications required that approval be received from a higher administrative level prior to the issuance of an invitation to any potential participant, i.e., it was necessary to obtain approval from the state's chief school officer before issuing any District (LEA) Superintendent invitation. Similarly, it was necessary to receive district superintendent approval prior to the issuance of school invitations.

State Invitations

During the second week of October 1971, fifty-two copies of the Chief State School Officer invitation letters were released. After the text had been approved by USOE, the letters were prepared by ETS, and final copies transmitted to USOE for signature. The letters were signed by S.P. Marland, Jr., U.S. Commissioner of Education, and Floyd T. Christian, President, Council of Chief State School Officers. ETS began the invitational phase by releasing this initial mailing to the chief state school officers in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the National Catholic Education Association.

The Chief State School Officer (CSSO) invitation described the study, its background, and the benefits to be gained from its accomplishment. The

TM 002 680

---

*Prepared for presentation at the American Educational Research Association meetings, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 25 - March 1, 1973.

(CSSO) was asked to approve the participation of his/her state in the Anchor Test Study, to prepare a letter of endorsement for district superintendents in the state, and to appoint a State Coordinator for the project. The State Coordinator's function was to 1) assure the existence of selected schools, 2) provide the names of district superintendents in the selected school districts, 3) assist in the resolution of any communication problems in the state, and 4) provide liaison between ETS and the Chief State School Officer.

As endorsements were received from each chief state school officer, it was possible to contact the person designated as State Coordinator. A letter acknowledging this individual's appointment was prepared and sent to him/her, together with a computer-prepared listing of the selected districts in the state. State coordinators were asked to supply the names and addresses of the district superintendents whose schools had been selected for participation in either the primary or back-up samples.

District Invitations

Upon receipt of the district superintendents' names and addresses, it was possible to begin the district invitation process. Since the beginning of this phase depended on replies from the state coordinators, the release of district invitations varied from state to state, beginning in November 1971 and lasting through January 1972.

District invitations consisted of four components: a letter of invitation, a list of selected primary and back-up schools within the district, four descriptive brochures, and a reply postcard.

District superintendents were asked to approve the participation of selected schools in their districts and to appoint a District Coordinator, who would verify the existence of selected schools (as well as the existence of grades 4, 5, and 6), provide the names and addresses of school principals, help with the distribution of school invitations, and assist in the resolution of any communication problems. Each superintendent was sent a list of schools selected to participate, as well as a list of those schools selected on a back-up basis, i.e., schools which would be invited only if a specific originally selected (primary sample) school was unable to participate. Most of the district invitations were released during late November and December, although some new back-up district invitations were released as late as March. The State Coordinator was notified when the invitations for districts in his/her state were released. A return reply control system was maintained so that nonrespondents could be contacted and appropriate back-up districts invited.

At weekly intervals during the district invitation phase, computer-produced status reports were released. Each state coordinator received a report for the districts within his/her state. The report showed districts agreeing to participate and the name of the individual appointed as District Coordinator. In addition, the report listed those districts invited but not yet responding, those declining the invitation, and those containing back-up schools which had not yet been invited.

Although the school, rather than the district was the primary sampling unit for the Study, some overall figures on district participation may be of interest. 1,112 districts were represented by the original Westat samples for the restandardization and equating studies combined.

(Some districts contained schools in both.) Twenty ineligible districts were deleted, and nine supplementary districts added, for an adjusted total of 1,101. A total of 1,096 districts actually accepted the invitation to participate (99.5%); of the number accepting, 1,023 (93.3%) were primary sample districts, and 73 (6.7%) were substitute districts.

School Invitations

With the return of a district superintendent's reply card to NIS, preparations were begun for the mailing of individual school invitation packets. School invitation packets, although addressed to individual principals, were mailed to the responsible district coordinator. This permitted direct distribution through the district office, and school principals immediately became aware that the district had approved participation. It also served to introduce the individual appointed as District Coordinator. A cover letter, sent with these packets, requested that the district coordinator distribute the invitations to the schools, help in describing the project to the principals, and assure that the school(s) completed and returned the reply forms contained in the invitation packet.

The invitation letter requested that the school principal approve participation for his/her school and appoint an individual to serve as School Coordinator. This individual would have primary responsibility for the actual test administration and data collection. The School Coordinator would complete a Pre-Test Information Form, be responsible for proper test administration, receive and distribute test materials, and complete the school and class summary forms. Since these tasks would involve other than class time, the School Coordinator would receive an honorarium based on the number of pupils tested.

School invitation packets were first released in December and mailings continued until April. Schools unable to accept the invitation were replaced

by schools designated as back-ups in the sample. Depending upon the characteristics of the originally selected school, the specific back-ups were located either in the same district, or in another district and/or state. In some cases, this required going back one step in the process and issuing an invitation to a district superintendent not previously invited.

During the entire school invitation process, the district coordinators, state coordinators, and the USOE were kept informed of the status of all school invitations.

In the Restandardization Study, the original sample consisted of 940 schools. Of that number, 27 were ineligible (closing, non-existent grades, etc.) and were not invited, nor was any attempt made to obtain substitutes for them. A special group of 178 districts provided a supplementary sample of 20 additional primary schools. Of the resulting group of 932 schools, 918 or 98.4% actually tested and provided usable data. Of these 918 schools, 838 (91.3%) were originally selected (primary sample) schools, and 80 (8.7%) were substitute schools. Of the 202,756 pupils in these 918 schools, 95.1% (192,749) provided usable data.

For the conduct of the equating Study, a total of 448 units, each containing a minimum of two classes at each of grades 4, 5, and 6 was required. When an individual school did not fulfill this requirement, two or more schools were combined to form a "pseudo school", which then served as a school-unit. Of the 448 units required, 445 (99.3%) were obtained. The 445 units represented a total of 736 schools, of which 639 (86.8%) were original (primary) sample schools and 97 (13.2%) were substitute schools. Of the 143,636 pupils in the 736 schools, 93.9% (134,855) provided usable data.

MATERIALS PREPARATION AND SHIPPING

School participation in the Anchor Test Study was confirmed by the return of an agreement postcard and a completed Pre-Test Information Form. The postcard designated a School Coordinator, the contact for all subsequent Study transactions. The Pre-Test Information Form served three purposes: it updated the school description file on the USOE computer tapes, it supplied additional input data required for the study, and it provided the information needed to assign tests and prepare shipments.

Pre-Test Information Forms were received and recorded in a master control system, assuring complete returns from all participants. The forms for Equating Study were audited to assure the existence of two classes each at grades 4, 5, and 6 and/or to assure that the grades represented were the appropriate component of a testing unit (i.e., "pseudo-school"). All Pre-Test Information Forms were thoroughly edited, and school coordinators were contacted for any missing or incomplete information. All equating schools were randomly assigned to a particular test-pair, with the restriction that neither test assigned had already been administered as part of the school's own program.

These test assignments, together with the class descriptions, provided the basic information necessary for the computer preparation of control forms and shipping orders. The shipping notice served as the master control form. Produced for each individual school, it listed the School Coordinator and Test Administrator kits (materials) to be packaged and shipped. The School Coordinator was provided with a kit for each separate test form and level being administered at the school including a School Coordinator's Manual and Report Form, copies of the Test Administrator's Manuals, test books and answer sheets, envelopes for the return of answer sheets, and special acknowledgement-of-receipt cards.

The Test Administrator's Kit provided the materials necessary to administer one test to a class or group of students, including the appropriate Test Administrator's Manual, a Class Identification Form, and test books and answer sheets.

A label was attached to each kit, identifying it as containing a specified test for a particular teacher. In the Norming Study, each teacher (class or group test administrator) received one individually addressed kit.

Because two tests were administered in the Equating Study, each teacher received two personally addressed kits. Since alternate classes, within an equating school, were asked to administer tests in an alternate sequence, a second label was affixed to each kit in order to clearly identify which kit contained materials for the test to be administered first and for the test to be administered second.

In addition to the shipping notice, each school coordinator received a computer-produced School Coordinator's Report Form. This form was designed to provide additional testing information and to help the coordinator organize the return of completed answer sheets. It listed all the class/teacher titles and tests, individually, and suggested that the coordinator use the form to verify complete returns. Coordinators for norming schools were asked to indicate the grade level for each participating class group, the number of students in the class actually tested, and the total number of pupils enrolled in the class. For participants in the Equating Study, the information was requested twice: once for each of the two tests administered. Equating Study participants were also asked to indicate the actual sequence of their test administrations, as well as the one test for which they preferred to have scores reported. A similar computer-produced Class Identification Form served as the cover document for each separate class group.

MATERIAL RECEIPT/SCORING AND REPORTING

The week of April 17th was designated as the week for schools to administer the Anchor Test Study instruments. The weeks of April 10th and April 24th were established as alternate administration weeks. Approximately 85% of the participants were able to administer the tests during the primary testing week. The alternate weeks were used by those schools with program conflicts, and several schools in the Eastern area whose semester vacations overlapped the primary administration week. Through immediate telephone follow-up, it was possible to obtain completed answer sheets and cover documents from 99.7% of those schools that had agreed to participate.

The initial step in material-return/receiving consisted of determining that answer sheets had been enclosed for each participating class (one set of answer sheets for each class in the Norming Study and two sets of answer sheets for each class in the Equating Study) and that no irregularities existed. The answer sheets were then forwarded for scanning and editing.

Scoring and Reporting

Optical transcription of header sheet and answer sheet information was the initial data processing step in the scoring and reporting cycle. Information was transcribed directly to magnetic tape by an NCS optical transcription machine. Computer editing programs scanned the transcribed data and produced a listing of all student and/or school information that appeared to be in conflict. This information was corrected, updated, and re-introduced into the system by re-processing the original input documents. Editing specifications were implemented in order to assure "clean" and valid data. During the course of all processing, stringent quality control procedures were maintained in order to assure accuracy.

While the data for all students and schools were being processed and matched to the master computer file for use in the subsequent analyses, basic score reports were provided for immediate release to the participants. Based on each publisher's current normative data, a roster of results was prepared for each school. Schools participating in the Norming Study received rosters of individual Word Analysis, Reading, and Total scores on the Metropolitan Reading Test. Since each student in the Equating Study had taken two tests, the school was allowed to select the one test for which it preferred to have scores reported.

Score rosters (by class) provided raw scores, the publisher's national percentile rank, and a stanine score for each pupil tested, as well as class summary data.

In addition to the class data for each school, a combined grade level summary was prepared. This grade level report showed the raw score mean, the standard deviation, the pupil "N", and the number and percent of students falling in each quartile of the publisher's national norms (for all classes in that grade combined). In order to help schools understand the scores they were receiving, all reports included a description entitled "Interpreting Score Reports". This document served to define the scores and normative information, as well as to explain the use of summary data.

Roster preparation and release were scheduled to provide results to all schools as quickly as possible, hopefully prior to the end of the school year. More than 90% of the school reports were released to participants during the first week in June. The reports for tardy respondents and schools with irregularities were mailed during subsequent weeks. By June 19th, all school reports had been released and all school coordinators had been sent their honoraria for assisting the Anchor Test Study. Upon completion of score reporting, the data analyses for the Norming and Equating studies were begun.